

Guide Along Path of Aging begins June 13 at PTC

Barb Jadick, an only child, became the primary caregiver for her aging parents when she was in her late forties.

She watched them suffer through the mental and physical changes before they eventually died while she took care of her own family and worked full-time as a nurse.

Jadick's situation is not unique. Millions of Americans provide some form of care giving at some point in their lives.

Jadick's only child might someday face that prospect.

"I don't want my only son to go through what I went through," she said. "I continued to take care of my parents for 15 years.

"You never think you are doing the right thing or that you're spending enough time. You are trying to take care of and love your family; and, at the same time show love to your parents who have given you so much through your life. It pulls you apart."

There was no one to guide Jadick, but there is now.

Beginning this June, a five-part series on aging is being offered at Piedmont Technical College (PTC) in Greenwood.

And Jadick, a Pennsylvania native who is health coordinator at PTC's Continuing Education & Economic Development Dept., plans to attend for professional and personal reasons.

The series is aimed not only toward current caregivers, but also to anyone who might be in that position in the future.

The fee is \$20 for the general public.

Called the **"Guide Along the Path of Aging"**, the series will be PTC's James C. Self Conference Center (Room 102-C) starting Wednesday, June 13.

It will continue with four-hour morning sessions about once a month through Wed., Nov. 7.

PTC is joining with the Upstate Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the Upper Savannah Area Agency on Aging to

present the five-part proactive series to help guide long-term care administrators, nurses, social workers, counselors and the general public in understanding the aging process.

Jadick said she wants to be prepared for what may happen to her in the future.

"It is a heavy subject, but it is something people need to take the time to listen to," said Jeanne Hughston, PTC's program manager for conferences & special events.

"If you can educate people ahead of time, it will make the process a lot easier. We've all got to go through it."

The series will cover five subjects, starting with **"Legal Pitfalls: Protect Yourself and Your Assets."**

It will be presented by syndicated columnist and attorney Jan Warner who will answer questions about different legal issues that affect mature adults. Representatives of S.C. Lt. Governor's Office on Aging will also be present to discuss Medicare, Medicare fraud, Social Security and other aging resources.

Session Two - set for Wed., July 25 - is called **"Taking Care of Your Loved One and Yourself Without Guilt."**

It will be presented by Alice Truluck, who has a consulting firm in Columbia and much long-term care experience.

"Caregivers have a tendency to put themselves last and burn themselves out," Hughston said. "If they don't learn to take care of themselves, they can't take care of that person."

Karen Nichols, director of nursing for a skilled nursing facility in Greer, will also speak during this session on "creating an environment for the living." She often speaks on culture change in long-term care and creating a life worth living for elders.

Session Three will be held Wed., Aug. 29 and is called **"When is Memory Loss Serious?"**

The session will cover subjects such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Jan Merling from the USC's Arnold School of Public Health, will speak on dementia and how to keep the dialogue open.

"Helping to train the caregiver on how to communicate with an aging person suffering from dementia is very important," Hughston said. "When they call the name of someone from their past, we tend to try and correct them. You don't do that because you confuse them more. It's nothing personal. We don't know how to communicate with them.

Jadick knows firsthand.

"I still wanted my mother.

Whether I was 40, whether I was 50, I still wanted to converse with my mother," she said.

"But I realized the roles changed. I was almost like her mother. It was very difficult emotionally. I can recall going to see her and crying all the way to the place and all the way home."

Session Four, entitled **"The Truth About Long-Term Care Insurance,"** will be held Wed., Sept. 26.

Deborah McPherson from the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging will present the information.

Session Five and the final segment will be Wed., Nov. 7. It is called **"Emotional and Practical Preparation for the Latter Stages in Life."**

David Martin, director and instructor in PTC's funeral services department, will speak on "What you need to think about in preparation for the end of life." Stephen Lemons, director of Pastoral Services at Self Regional Healthcare, will talk about "easing the loss of a loved one."

Retirees who have moved into the region to attend the sessions are also encouraged to attend.

"Their children and family aren't necessarily close by. They need to know where they can get help and get that information to their families," Hughston said.

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Continuing education credits will be provided by Upstate AHEC for social workers, nurses, long-term care administrators, professional counselors and related occupations. Different fees will apply.

To register for one or all sessions, call (864) 941-8400.

Free respite care is available for current caregivers by calling the Upper Savannah Family Caregiver Support Program at (864) 941-8067.

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